

**Housing Committee**  
**Tuesday, February 28, 2023**  
**Senate Bill 4: AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S PRESENT AND FUTURE**  
**HOUSING NEEDS - Support**

Senator Moore, Representative Luxenberg, Senator Sampson, Representative Scott, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Travis Woodward, I am a resident of Hamden, and an engineer in the Connecticut Department of Transportation. I am also the president of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union representing over 25,000 state, municipal, board of education, active and retired, public and private sector workers. I offer the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 4:

Housing insecurity is an issue that too many people in our state and nation face. This includes fellow union members who, even with contracts, are confronted with low wages, expensive rental costs, and a lack of residential options. There is no reason why a paraeducator or a school bus worker should have to work multiple jobs to make the ends meet. Ensuring that people can live their lives filled with dignity and respect is essential. And, having a place to call home is central to that.

Everyone needs a safe and stable place to live—and a community where they can put down roots. That's how we build prosperous, stable families and communities and a thriving state. In a state as wealthy as Connecticut, we could be leaders in ensuring that everyone can afford a stable, healthy place to live.

Instead, rent has skyrocketed across Connecticut, increasing an average of 20% over the last two years, (and even higher in some communities) largely because corporate landlords have increased rental prices by such a large margin that many families struggle to pay rent each month. Meanwhile wages have not kept up. Making matters worse, the number of “no fault” evictions has also increased, meaning tenants are losing their homes even when a landlord does not claim they did anything wrong.

People cannot have a future in Connecticut if they cannot afford a place to live. The skyrocketing price of rent in Connecticut is hurting thousands of families and the communities that depend on them. When housing becomes unaffordable it has cascading effects—like displacement from beloved homes, neighborhoods, and schools. It means people have to choose between paying rent and necessities like groceries and electricity. It even results in homelessness.

When working people in Connecticut can afford to pay their rent, however, they can take care of their families. It means that they can buy groceries and their kids school supplies—that they can put gas in their car and get to work. Working people don't funnel money out of their communities—they invest in them. That creates prosperity for Connecticut's families, communities, government, and businesses.

Rent hikes and “no fault” evictions are displacing families from their homes and communities, fueling gentrification, driving evictions and homelessness, and mostly impact Black and Brown working class renters and immigrant communities. Yet current law puts no limit on how much landlords can raise rents and only protects senior and disabled tenants in larger apartment buildings from “no fault” evictions.

Renters deserve stability, safety, prosperity, and the chance to put down roots and build a future in our state—the same kind of predictability homeowners enjoy when they have a mortgage.

Senate Bill 4 is a step in the right direction, but it can and should be stronger. The rent increase cap should be lower; either 2.5 or 3%. This tracks pre-pandemic average rent increases and would be affordable and predictable to tenants. It should cover apartments in between tenants so landlords can’t push out tenants to increase the rent. And, it should expand good cause eviction protections to cover all tenants so they have greater stability in their homes.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Travis Woodward  
Hamden, CT